

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-13 (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method for repayment of the investment costs of an elevator for a new elevator installation, said method comprising the steps of:

collecting identifying data of a passenger wanting to use the elevator by reading an access device associated with identifying data of said passenger with a reader device connected to a control system for said elevator, wherein said identifying data comprises at least one of a unique identification number, a name, an address, relevant age and health information, and relevant group affiliation or access permission information;

identifying the passenger based on said identifying data;

determining the desired destination floor for said passenger;

verifying that said passenger is authorized to access said elevator to reach said destination floor wherein elevators said passenger may use and destination floors said passenger may reach using any one of said elevators are determined based on group affiliation, address, or access permission information contained in said identifying data;

transmitting passenger identification, authorization and desired floor information to said elevator control system for processing; and

charging said passenger based on said identifying data, wherein said charging comprises:

tracking elevator usage by said passenger,

determining an appropriate billing party based on passenger identification,

and

assessing a usage charge to said passenger, after said determining and said verifying steps, based on factors including at least one of frequency of use, length of elevator ride, time and date of use, number of rides, relevant passenger

affiliation, passenger age or health information, passenger address, and direction of elevator travel such that repayment costs are distributed amongst elevator users ~~according to a predetermined fee schedule~~ on a passenger-specific basis.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device comprises a transponder for use in a radio-frequency identification system such that said personal data is associated with the radio-frequency identification of said transponder.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device comprises a ticket card having a magnetic stripe whereon a reference to said personal data is encoded.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device comprises an optically-readable access code affixed to a surface, said personal data being associated with said access code.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device is an identity card or a personal identification card or a health insurance card or a student card or a driver's license or a party membership card.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device comprises an electronically readable sticker that a passenger may apply a surface, said sticker being associated with said personal data.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device comprises a computer-readable medium contained within or accessible by a wireless communication device carried by said passenger, said communication device transmitting said personal data to said reader device through Bluetooth, infra-red or telephone communication.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein each passenger is charged a different sum for the use of said elevator based at least on the desired destination floor of each passenger.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein each passenger is charged a different sum for the use of said elevator based at least on age, health, and mobility information contained in said identifying data.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, further comprising the collection of statistical data regarding the use of said elevator, said statistical data comprising date, time, travel distance, travel direction, and passenger type information; said passenger type information comprising age and health information.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, said passenger type information further comprising at least one of group affiliation, access level, address and unique passenger identifier.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said reader device is installed inside of said elevator.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the times of use of an elevator by a passenger are registered separately for each passenger by said reader device.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said reader device is connected to a floor selection device, allowing said passenger to call an elevator by properly interacting with said reader device, causing the elevator control system to allow the selection of a destination floor in accordance with said passenger's identifying data.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said reader device is installed in an elevator lobby.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein said reader device is connected to an elevator call device, allowing a passenger to call an elevator by properly interacting with said reader device, causing the elevator control system to issue an elevator call in accordance with said identifying data.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said access device further allows said passenger to access and pay for travel on other means of transport such as public transportation systems, taxis, trains, ships, airplanes, and other similar modes of transportation.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said reader device determines an appropriate currency in which to charge said passenger based on said passenger's identifying data.

32. (Currently Amended) In a fee-based elevator access system designed for the repayment of costs associated with an elevator installation in a facility, said system having a reader device to enable and charge for passenger elevator use, an access device designed to interact with said reader device for the purpose of passenger access, said access device comprising:

a data storage unit containing unique identifier data associated with identifying data about a passenger, said identifying data comprising at least one of a unique identification number, a name, an address, relevant age and health information, and relevant group affiliation or access permission information; and

a reader interaction unit allowing said access device to convey information to said reader device, wherein said reader device, by interacting with said reader interaction unit, is able to access and convey said identifying data from said data storage unit, thereby enabling a passenger equipped with said access device to utilize an elevator for a fee and to access specific destinations, both the fee assessed and the available destinations being based on said identifying data,

wherein an appropriate fee is assessed to each passenger upon the interaction of said reader device and said access device ~~based on a predetermined fee schedule~~ passenger-specific basis such that repayment costs are equitably distributed wherein ~~said fee schedule~~ the cost distribution shortens the time period for full repayment of elevator investment costs.

33. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said data storage unit further containing said personal data.

34. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said data storage unit comprising an optically readable sequence of symbols.

35. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said reader interaction unit comprising an optically readable sequence of symbols.

36. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said reader interaction unit comprising a magnetic strip.

37. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said data storage unit comprising a computer memory device.

38. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 32, said reader interaction unit comprising a radio-frequency communication device.

39. (Previously Presented) The access device of claim 33, said identifying data comprising a passenger name, address, age information, health information, group affiliation information, access restrictions, preferred payment currency, and information regarding a remaining balance of funds available for elevator access.

40. (Currently Amended) A fee-based elevator-access system designed for the repayment of costs associated with an elevator installation in a facility, said system comprising:

an information reading device designed to collect identifying information from passengers wishing to use an elevator, said device interacting with an elevator control system whereby access to the elevator and to elevator service levels is controlled, and an elevator billing system whereby passengers are charged for elevator use based on said identifying information;

an access device designed to interact with said information reading device, said access device being associated with identifying information of a passenger wherein said passenger may obtain access to an elevator to the extent that said passenger is authorized to use said elevator by allowing said reading device to retrieve identifying and billing information associated with said access device; and

identifying passenger information associated with said access device, said passenger information comprising passenger name, age, address, relevant mobility restrictions, relevant group affiliation information, billing information, and elevator use authorization levels,

wherein an appropriate fee is assessed to each passenger upon the interaction of said reader device and said access device ~~based on a predetermined fee schedule~~passenger-specific basis such that repayment costs are equitably distributed wherein ~~said fee schedule~~the cost distribution shortens the time period for full repayment of elevator investment costs.

41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said reader device being installed such that charges are only incurred when a passenger selects an accessible floor.

42. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said reader device being installed such that charges are incurred when a passenger calls an elevator.

43. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said reader device comprising an optical scanner.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said reader device comprising a radio-frequency device.

45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said reader device comprising a digital computing device.

46. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said access device comprising an optically readable sequence of symbols.

47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said access device comprising a radio-frequency transponder.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said access device comprising a magnetic strip.

49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said passenger information being stored by said elevator billing system.

50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, said passenger information being stored by said elevator control system.